



## **KAYA WANDJOO NGALA NOONGARPEDIA – WELCOME TO OUR NOONGARPEDIA**

*Report on a research project.*<sup>1</sup>

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### **Chapter 7 Gnulla Koorliny – Working with other groups and platforms**

#### **Introduction**

The success of the Noongarpedia Project has depended on forging relationships with groups already active in the Noongar knowledge space. Perhaps the most important relationships were built with Storylines (State Library of Western Australia) and Wikimedia Australia. Organisations such as Noongar Boodjar Language Cultural Aboriginal Corporation, the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and South Coast Natural Resource Management were also important, particularly in offering support in identifying key resources and offering expert advice on Noongar language and knowledge.

Part of the reason for building these relationships is to make sure that other Noongar groups knew what the Noongarpedia project is trying to achieve and that there is no desire to replicate their work. Another reason is to seek out opportunities to collaborate and to test the extent to which these groups might themselves want to use Noongarpedia. Members of our team took up opportunities to join groups and to attend events targeting Noongar community and celebrating Noongar knowledge. What follows is a description of some of this work.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Research Council Discovery Indigenous project IN140100017 (2014-17):  
*Noongar kaatdijin bidi – Noongar knowledge networks; or, Why is there no Noongar Wikipedia?*

## Noongar Boodjar Language Cultural Aboriginal Corporation

In early 2016 Kim Scott, Jennie Buchanan and Ingrid Cumming first met with the *Noongar Boodjar Language Cultural Aboriginal Corporation* when they launched their new premises in Bunbury (Western Australia). The Centre is run by two full-time and three part-time staff, including a Noongar linguist, an education officer and a community engagement officer. The role of the centre is to record, analyse and preserve the Noongar language.<sup>2</sup> The launch was an emotional and inspiring celebration of all the work that has been done over decades to revive and research Noongar language.

This process started in the late 1970s when a group of elders came together to ‘sort out’ how the language would survive. Robyn McCarron (1992) described the early history of this work on Noongar language. The centre based its work on a series of meetings with Noongars – at Marribank in 1985, Wellington Mills in 1990, Narrogin in 1991 and in October 1992, the Noongar Language Festival at Dryandra. It draws upon the work of linguists Wilf Douglas, Alan Dench and Nicholas Thieberger and the fieldwork of the Noongar language workers Glenys Collard and Rose Whitehurst. It obtained funding from a range of government and private sources which have enabled it to employ staff and to produce its publications to date – transcribed yarns, a language course and a dictionary (and see Smith-Ali, 2016).

Over the past ten years or so the new organisation has carried out considerable publication work in conjunction with Bachelor Press in the Northern Territory. This includes books, readers, posters and teaching resources. The Noongarpedia project has subsequently purchased a collection of this work and used it extensively in Wikibombs, work in schools, universities and other organisations.

The launch of the new centre in 2016 was held in the car park, out in the open air, and was well attended by many people in the community both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It was exciting to see so many people invested in the future of Noongar language. As the representatives from Noongarpedia walked through the crowd they were reunited with family and familiar faces and met with many other leaders. The following day the team met with CEO Sue Hanson to talk about the work that the Noongarpedia is doing and how we may be able to support each other.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Noongar Language Centre opens in Bunbury’, *Bunbury Mail*. 3 February 2016: <http://www.bunburymail.com.au/story/3702949/preserving-cultural-heritage/>.



*Noongar Boodjar Language Cultural Aboriginal Corporation  
Opening Speeches, Bunbury 2016. Photo by Jennie Buchanan*

The first outcome of this meeting is that the Language Centre has helped to shape Noongapedia activity and decisions about where to focus attention. For example, the centre has coordinated Noongar agreements about orthographies (spelling systems). While disagreements among Noongar remain, the centre offers a forum for these to be aired and resolved. Part of this work is set out on their website:

*The orthography (spelling system) used by NBLCAC to write the Noongar language is based on decisions made during a series of Noongar language and culture meetings that took place in the south-west during the mid 1980s to late 1990s.*

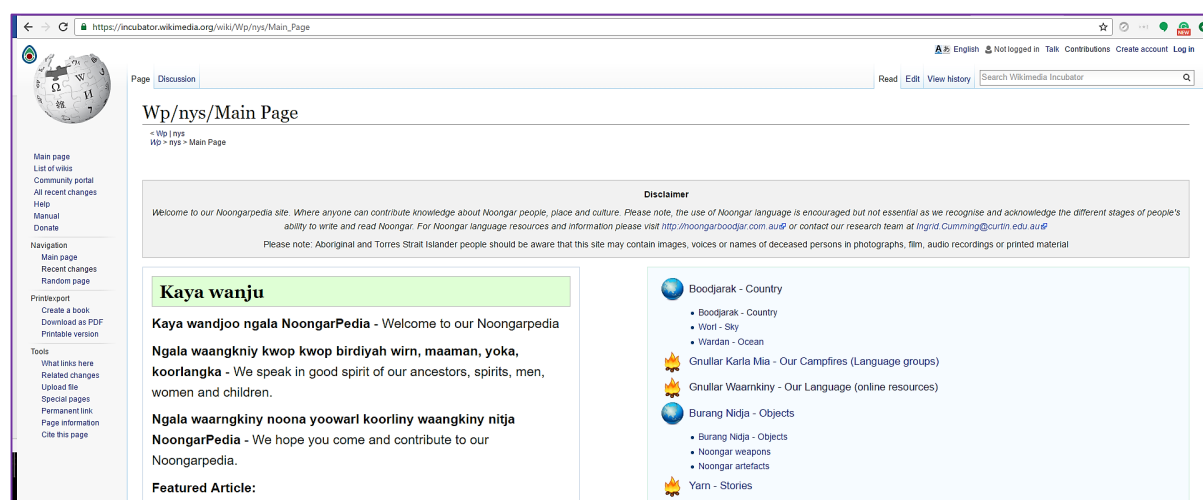
*Hundreds of Noongar Elders took part in these meetings and language festivals to discuss the Noongar language situation, document language and work towards developing a Noongar language course and dictionary. The first Noongar Language and Culture Centre was established in Bunbury at the Bunbury Aboriginal Progress Association in 1986. This small group of dedicated people took the lead in revitalising Noongar language and coordinating inclusive community workshops.*

*It was at the 1997 meeting at Marribank, attended by approximately 200 Noongar people, that an agreement was made on a standard orthography which was to be used for teaching Noongar in schools. There was a unanimous vote that the language would be spelt NYOONGAR. The establishment of a standard spelling system allowed for consistency across language programs and the development of a set of learning materials that*

*could be shared across Noongar country. It is acknowledged that the re-emerging Noongar has been developed under the influence of English and that there is still considerable work to be done to bring the Noongar language closer to its original voice.*

*In the process of developing the teaching and learning resources for the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) course in schools, the spelling was changed to NOONGAR.<sup>3</sup>*

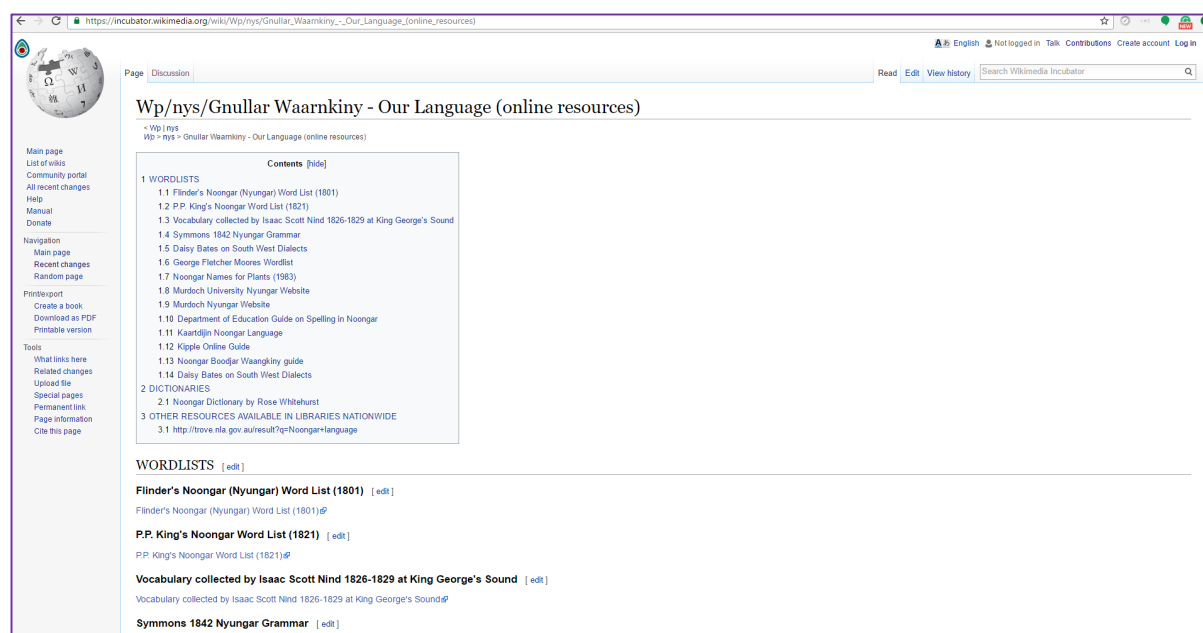
The advice of the centre has been crucial in helping shape the decision of the Noongarpedia team. For example, it became clear from the experience of the centre that there is roughly a 10-year development stage before language speakers can feel comfortable in teaching people language themselves. In their view, fluent and confident Noongar speakers and writers are still in development. At that stage in the Noongarpedia project, we intended it to be exclusively in Noongar language. What emerged from our relationship and out of the research of the centre was that the project would need to reconsider this plan and allow for both English and Noongar, or for the 'pedia to have 'dual language capability' if it is to increase the number of contributors and editors.



In addition, it gave the Noongarpedia project a place to refer those who wish to edit in Noongar language, where they can seek resources and guidance from the Noongar Language Centre.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Noongar Language Centre. <http://noongarboodjar.com.au/language>.

<sup>4</sup> See: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Main\\_Page](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Main_Page).



Within the new ‘hybrid’ Noongarpedia, the team also decided to include links to resources from the Language Centre, including word lists, dictionaries and a grammar guide. This sits in the section called ‘Gnullar Waarnkiny – Our Language (online resources)’.<sup>5</sup>

## South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council

The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) is the native title service provider to Noongar. They were set up to coordinate native title claims, assist with the resolution of an agreement between Noongar and the State Government of Western Australia and to support Noongar culture, language, heritage and society.<sup>6</sup>

The Noongarpedia team sought to develop an ongoing relationship with SWALSC from the start. In the early stages this was done through Noongar elder Sandra Harben, Manager of the Cultural Heritage section of SWALSC, and historian Denise Cook. SWALSC officially endorsed the Noongarpedia project and commissioned its staff to assist with collating all the known data and resources – both electronic and physical - within the SWALSC database.

One of the resources we gained through SWALSC was a series of audio recordings in the Noongar Language and Culture Centre collection with summaries and transcriptions. Denise Cook created a list of Noongar language resources publicly available. These proved critical in later work with students, at Wikibombs and in primary schools.

<sup>5</sup> See: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Gnullar Waarnkiny - Our Language \(online resources\)](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Gnullar_Waarnkiny_-_Our_Language_(online_resources)).

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.noongar.org.au>.



## Storylines Project

Storylines is an online archive for the State Library of Western Australia's digitised heritage collections relating to Aboriginal history in WA. Members of the public can view, print and engage with thousands of photographs, as well as a growing number of oral histories, historical documents, sounds and movies. Storylines also assists the Library in the digital return of photos and other materials to Aboriginal families, communities and organisations. It is also helping to identify many of the photographs in the J.S. Battye Collection, which are currently unidentified and unknown. Hundreds of photographs have been identified since 2013. Storylines is managed and hosted by the State Library of Western Australia, with advice and guidance provided by an Aboriginal Reference Group.<sup>7</sup>

From the inception of the Noongarpedia project, Damien Webb from Storylines has been keen to work together. Particularly attractive for him was the emphasis on using digital platforms to assist in the renewal of Indigenous knowledge and language. He also saw the potential of Storylines as a 'knowledge source' for Noongarpedia (and vice versa). Noongar content posted on Storylines, including its rich archive of photographs, could easily be cross-posted on Noongarpedia. In much the same way, content created and shared on the Noongarpedia could be taken up on the Storylines website and made available there too.

We were also keen to collaborate with Storylines on protocols for accessing digital content. Those who designed the software for Storylines had a number of years of experimentation, using software that had originally been developed as part of the Ara Irititja Project for use by Anangu communities in the APY Lands (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, northwest South Australia) (Anga Scales et al., 2013).<sup>8</sup> Their challenge was to design mechanisms for some content (particularly photos that had been repatriated to Anangu families) to be made available to family, to restricted groups (e.g. senior men or women only) or, in some cases, to a wider and more public audience.

## Wikimedia Australia

For obvious reasons our project seeks the closest collaboration with Wikipedia. Although one of our team has met Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales and briefed him on the Noongarpedia project, it is with Wikimedia Australia (WMA) that we have formed the closest relationship, principally through our contact with President Gideon Digby, commencing in 2014.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Storylines website: <http://storylines.slwa.wa.gov.au/archive/index.php>.

<sup>8</sup> See: Ara Irititja Project: <http://irititja.com/index.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Wikimedia Australia: [https://wikimedia.org.au/wiki/Wikimedia\\_Australia](https://wikimedia.org.au/wiki/Wikimedia_Australia).



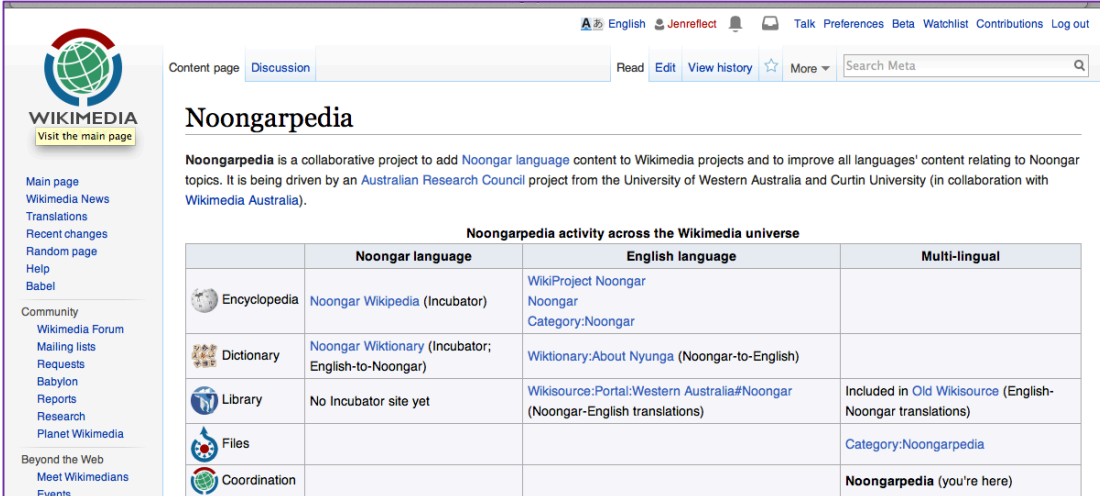
*Noongarpedia team member John Hartley meets Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales (House of Lords, London) at a book launch for The Creative Citizen Unbound (Hargreaves and Hartley, 2016).*

The Wikimedia team have assisted with technical development of three sites created since 2014. They offered hosting on their web server as the project worked through some of the earlier issues related to privacy and safe spaces to experiment with structure and content. The Wikimedia team offered excellent support in training user communities attending almost all of our development activities. They provided practical assistance with the exploration of Wiktionary, as another space for Noongar language development. The team met with members of Wikimedia Australia's executive to share ideas and to discuss how to create successful community outreach events. This is how the idea of a Wikibomb came to into existence as an event where people can feel safe, inspired and engaged.

Wikimedia Australia introduced the team to the kind of events they felt might be replicated by the Noongarpedia project. For example, representatives from

Noongarpedia attended a ‘Women in Design’ Wikibomb in Melbourne. This was a very successful Wikimedia event, prompting a large number of edits made by those interested in addressing gender inequality in the fields of architecture and design. The visit inspired our team to explore using Wikibombs to focus on a different theme for each event, such as elders, women and country in our community. It also shaped the idea that Noongar practices and modes of hospitality could help set the scene in each Wikibomb.

President Gideon Digby, other executive members and WMA members have attended numerous Wikibombs at the State Library of WA to assist with technical queries and training community editors. Sam Wilson, a committed Wikimedian, has offered strong practical assistance in the development of a Noongar Wiktionary as a space for compilation of language sources and dictionaries. Wiktionary offers a collaborative mechanism for users to enter Noongar terms, definitions and sources. As with the Noongarpedia and Wikipedia pages, there is a Talk page that allows users to discuss ideas and to offer their thoughts on the definitions posted. Sam has been working with the Noongarpedia team to explore the possibilities this mechanism offers. It is important to state that this has been done as part of Wikimedia Australia Outreach work and is part of their volunteer effort.



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia page for Noongarpedia. The page title is "Noongarpedia". Below the title, it states: "Noongarpedia is a collaborative project to add [Noongar language](#) content to Wikimedia projects and to improve all languages' content relating to Noongar topics. It is being driven by an [Australian Research Council](#) project from the University of Western Australia and Curtin University (in collaboration with [Wikimedia Australia](#))." Below this is a table titled "Noongarpedia activity across the Wikimedia universe".

	Noongar language	English language	Multi-lingual
Encyclopedia	<a href="#">Noongar Wikipedia</a> (Incubator)	<a href="#">WikiProject Noongar</a> <a href="#">Noongar</a> <a href="#">Category:Noongar</a>	
Dictionary	<a href="#">Noongar Wiktionary</a> (Incubator; English-to-Noongar)	<a href="#">Wiktionary:About Nyunga</a> (Noongar-to-English)	
Library	No Incubator site yet	<a href="#">Wikisource:Portal:Western Australia#Noongar</a> (Noongar-English translations)	Included in <a href="#">Old Wikisource</a> (English-Noongar translations)
Files			<a href="#">Category:Noongarpedia</a>
Coordination			<b>Noongarpedia</b> (you're here)

There has also been excellent collaboration with Wikipedians who have not attended public events but who interact with the team online. A small and dedicated group of editors are keen to be allies to the project. They have assisted when Noongarpedians have questions about things like structuring a page, creating Noongar-language headings and instructions, and the technical matters that have arisen over two years.

Through this connection with Wikimedia Australia, particularly Gideon Digby, Noongarpedia has been able to create a strong and resilient relationship with other Wikipedians as well as attending events carried out by Wikimedia Australia. For example, we joined a global event and presented at the Wikimedia Conference held in Perth in 2016 alongside global ‘Big Data’ expert Andy Mabbett from the UK and the



Toodyaypedia team. Since the first contact was made the relationship between Wikimedia Australia and Noongarpedia has been and continues to be one of reciprocity and respect.

### **Noongarpedia Facebook Page**

One of the early observations in the project's history was that many Noongar, particularly youngsters, use Facebook for social, family, work and cultural connections. This was consistent with research from other regions that identifies Facebook as a popular digital platform for Indigenous groups (Dyson and Brady, 2013).

Aaron Corn (2013) reflected on how he personally had 'more than 1100 friends of whom most are Indigenous Australians living outside major cities':

*In microcosm this suggests a rapid nationwide uptake of information technologies ... that was unthinkable even five years ago... Despite limited regional access to the private computing facilities and public communications infrastructure that most Australians in cities take for granted, a process of digital democratisation is nonetheless well underway throughout Australia, and it is rapidly changing the way that Indigenous communities come to know and interact with the rest of the world, and how the rest of the world comes to know and interact with them (2013: 2).*

Members of our team have seen an explosion of the use of Noongar language, terms and cultural information on Facebook on a daily basis. Written, video and photographic posts are regularly uploaded by Noongar and present a rich and diverse picture of being Noongar in contemporary times. Noongar are using Facebook to discuss historical experiences, to share archival and family images and stories amongst chosen friendship circles and Groups. Funeral pages exist as a way of paying respect, notifying the wider community and sharing fundraising events to help people to carry out their funeral obligations. Noongar cultural enterprise, small businesses, tourism enterprise, activist and arts groups all make use of Facebook. Young people and family groups are strong and regular users and active posters.

So it was decided to create a Noongarpedia Facebook page.<sup>10</sup> It acts as a source of information about events and activities, to help us to pay attention to how Noongar make use of Facebook, and as a means to link the community of Noongar Facebook users. It has been a successful way of creating awareness and enthusiasm for the project. It has attracted worldwide interest from people who have made contact with us to find out more about the project. It is also a contact point for media and journalists to pose questions and a place for conversation across the 700 or so people

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<sup>10</sup> Noongarpedia Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=noongarpedia>.

who have joined the page. The page has provided a direct link to the front page of the Noongarpedia site for ease of access.

## Wikibombs

One of the most useful consequences of the relationship that emerged between the project, the Storylines Project and Wikimedia Australia was the establishment of Wikibombs. The combined team held regular Noongarpedia Wikibombs, designed so that people could gather to edit and write articles, share ideas and receive training in how to use the site.<sup>11</sup>



Thanks to Damian Webb and the State Library of WA, we were lucky enough to get dedicated spaces that were fit out with all the technology you could ask for, Laptops, big screens, IPADS, Wi-Fi and a cosy space to interact, learn and contribute knowledge.



*Storylines, SLWA and Noongarpedia resources at a community Wikibomb.  
Photo by Jennie Buchanan.*

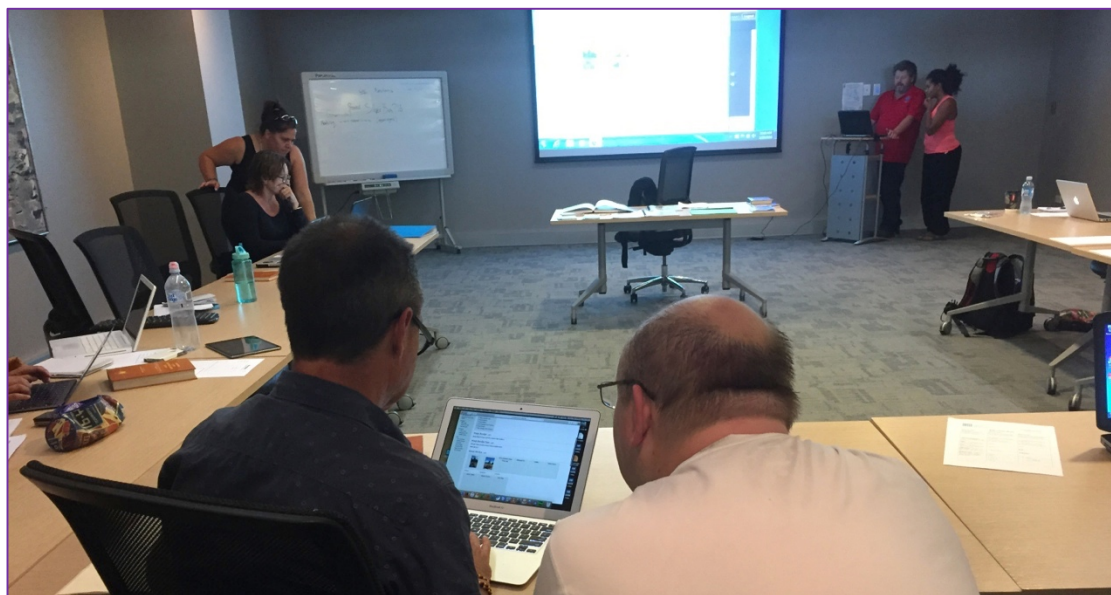
<sup>11</sup> See: <https://www.facebook.com/NoongarPedia-925565157522262/events>.

The idea of Wikibombs was loosely based on the Wikimedia practice of hosting ‘edit-a-thons’. An edit-a-thon is a scheduled event designed to encourage people to come together (sometimes on-line, other times off-line) to edit and create Wikipedia entries. Typically, these events focus on a specific topic and often prove to be an excellent way to encourage new Wikipedians to learn skills in editing and posting.

Similarly, the intention of our Wikibomb events is to:

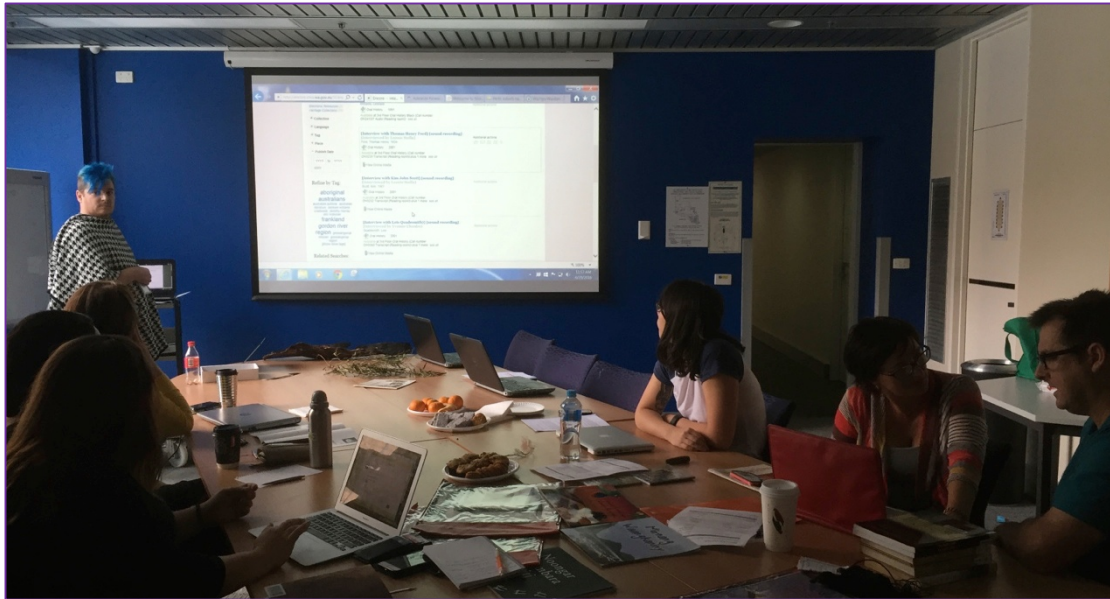
- To help build the 'pedia
- To help build relationships and a community around a particular theme (in this case Noongar knowledge)
- To find ways for Wikipedians to learn from one other
- To convince people to become new Wikipedians
- To help new Wikipedians to build confidence in producing posts and edits
- To help improve the quality of the 'pedia by accessing materials and experts
- To build a fun and social event

Wikibombs would be advertised through networks and social media. Typically, the Noongarpedia team and people from Wikimedia met at the State Library café just before the session to go over the plans for the session. Each session started with a welcome to country and mini information session for those who were new to the Noongarpedia. Resources were available in the form of books, lists, websites and storylines projects. These were used to help participants create entries. Noongarpedia team members and Wikipedians were on hand to assist with entry-making or to clarify information from the point of view of cultural knowledge or Wikimedia knowledge.



*Wikimedians and Noongarpedians at community Wikibombs at SLWA.*

*Photo by Jennie Buchanan*



*Storylines, Wikimedians and Noongarpeditors at community Wikibombs at SLWA.  
Photo by Jennie Buchanan*

Sessions ran as exciting ‘working bees’. At the same time, people could sit around, yarn, connect and share information. At the end the group would share what they had contributed or learned, encouraging those who participated to continue editing after the session, to share what they had learnt and how they have used Noongarpedia, and to bring others along to the next Wikibomb.

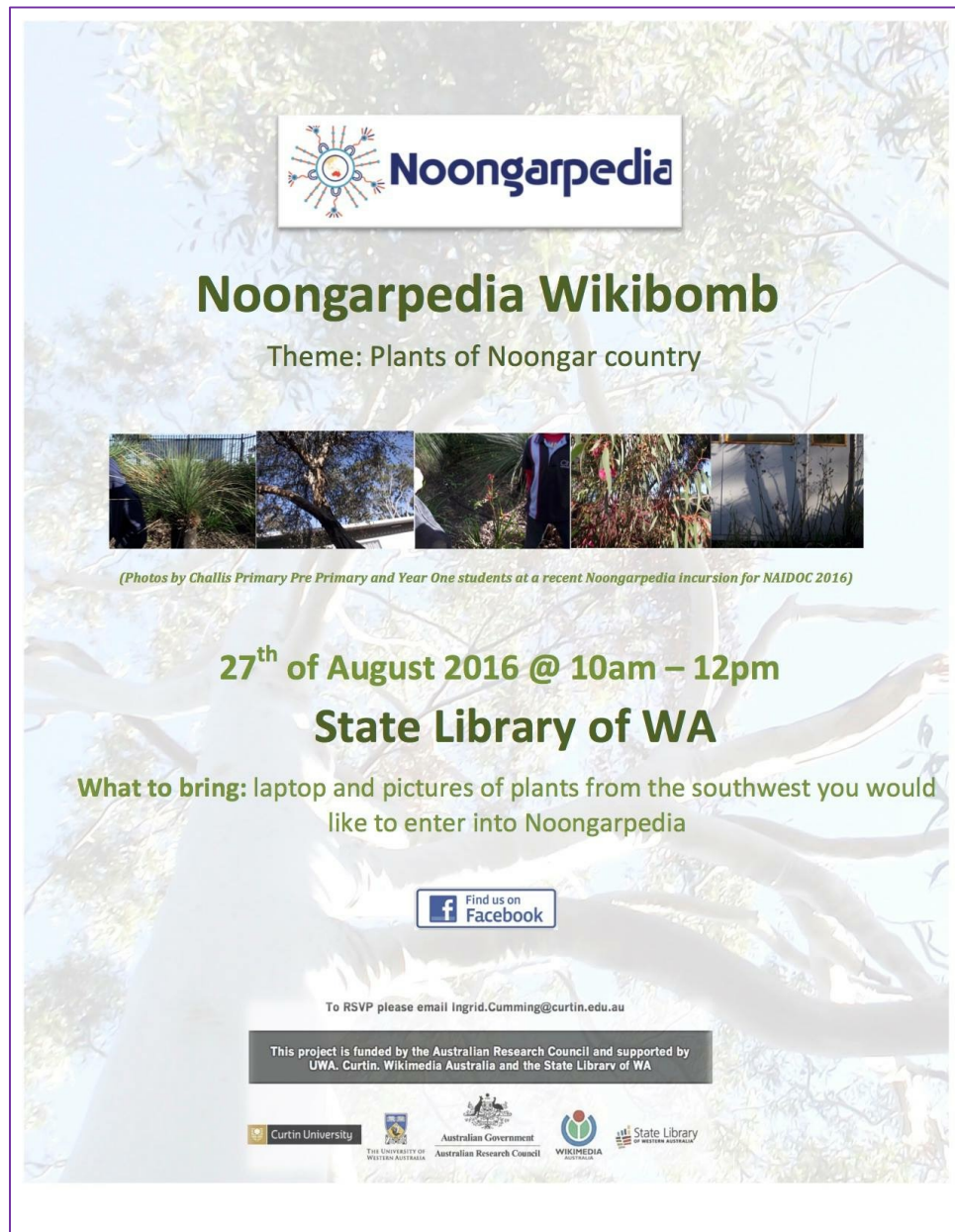
Each session has had a different theme, so that those present can focus on one area of content. Results can be seen in the Noongarpedia site. For example, themes included:

- *Kadadjiny kura yeye boorda*: acknowledging our ways of learning from the past, today and future
- *Woolah bibol waarnk*: celebrating Noongar writers
- *Woolah gnnullar yorga*: celebrating Noongar women
- *Dardi Noongar maaman*: Noongar footballers
- *Noongarabiny*: Noongar leaders on country

As a consequence of this element of the work over 100 people actively participated and posted on the Noongar incubator during sessions. On average over 50 posts were created or edited during each Wikibomb.

Early Wikibombs tended to be targeted at Noongar participation and representatives from organisations such as Yirra Yaakin Theatre, Woodside Petroleum, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and Noongar Language teachers. The model adopted was to invite a language-speaker to host skills development and language immersion in Noongar for the first part of a session, with the second part focusing on skills in using the Noongarpedia incubator to post content.





*Noongarpedia flyer created by Ingrid Cumming. Photo by Jennie Buchanan*

Soon after and with the facilitation of Storylines people, monthly sessions were hosted at the State Library of WA in Northbridge (Perth). This involved a shift towards offering an open invitation to the entire networks of both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community. The format was different from the earlier sessions with Noongar-only participation. However, the first part of each session always included a presentation of the project history, what we had achieved and the hopes we envisioned by creating a Noongarpedia editor community.

Roughly 10-15 participants consistently attended Wikibombs. They arrived from different backgrounds including Wikimedians, university lecturers, anthropologists and community members.

## **Yoolberup (Many Peaks) and Albany Heritage Reference Group**

Members of the Noongarpedia team took up an invitation to join a visit to a Noongar cultural site at Many Peaks on the south coast of Western Australia. This activity was co-hosted by the Albany Heritage Reference Group and the University of Western Australia. The event was to highlight the work of an ongoing South Coast National Resource Management project called ‘Restoring Connections’ at a site called Lake Pleasant View, which is being restored and protected as part of the program. It is a majestic place with much cultural heritage, including distinctive granite rock formations, a natural amphitheatre, an old cave site, pockets of bushland and a vast area of wetland including a freshwater lake. It has been purchased by the Albany Heritage Reference Group and has been the subject of cultural and environmental restoration activities since 2008. The property has long been a Registered Aboriginal Site but had been damaged, owing to excavation work.



*One of the many views from Yoolberup. Photo by Jennie Buchanan*



The Albany Heritage Reference Group and the Department of Indigenous Affairs has been working with South Coast Natural Resource Management to minimise impact to the site and to revegetate parts of the land, to restore it to its natural state. As an ABC news report noted:

*The site is currently utilised by various Indigenous groups, most prominently the Albany Heritage Reference Group, who regularly hold meetings on the site. Evidence of a recent campfire near the cave attests to the site's frequent use in this way.*<sup>12</sup>



*Yoolberup, Lake Pleasant outlook. Photo by Jennie Buchanan*

As part of a unit examining the connections between Noongar knowledge and Western science, UWA students visited the site for a day and conducted a cultural ecological survey. Of the 40 students in attendance, 15 were Noongar or Aboriginal young people from other areas. Ingrid Cummings noted:

*On this day at Yoolberup (Many Peaks) the weather was cool and rain was looming, but the ancestors looked over us, making sure the weather would allow the following experiences to be had and shared by the collective group.*

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<sup>12</sup> ABC, 2010: 'Restoring connection to country in Manypeaks'  
<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/07/08/2948331.htm>.

*We started by climbing the rock at which time an impressive 360 view of the swamp lands, mountain ranges and wilderness of the area was revealed. No words could do justice to the beauty that presented itself. The students were welcomed by the elders in attendance, Nana Lynette Knapp and Nan Averil Dean; two wise, kind and strong women who gave us their time and energy for the afternoon. During this early part of the day we made entries on the Noongarpedia on them, based on the conversations we had.<sup>13</sup>*

A member of the next generation of story keepers, Lindsay Dean, also joined the event and worked closely with the Noongarpedia team. He has the responsibility of carrying on the work of his late parents (Mr Dean was a Bardi Karrijarri man and Mrs Dean is a Minang Koreng yorga). Living in Albany, Lindsay has contributed much to the local and wider Aboriginal community in his life and work and has recently contributed to the Noongarpedia project through work at Lockyer Primary School.



*Noongarpedia CI Len Collard and Minang custodian Lindsay Dean, preparing for work with the students. Photo by Jennie Buchanan*

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<sup>13</sup> visit the following entries to see this work:

Lynette Knapp: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Lynette\\_Knapp](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Lynette_Knapp)

Avril Dean: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Averil\\_Dean](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Averil_Dean)

Lindsay Dean: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Lindsay\\_Dean](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Lindsay_Dean)



After being welcomed on site and invited to create content for the Noongarpedia, students then went on to do the scientific work allocated as part of the camp at the swamp, guided by Lindsay. Most of the Noongarpedia team joined them, offering insights and encouraging students to record their observations. Ingrid Cumming stayed behind with her two children and the 'nanas'. This was a chance for her children to engage with senior Noongar women. The women and children engaged in the age-old tradition of 'women's business'.

The Nanas first instructed Ingrid to light a fire. This is a great honour as the karla (fire) signifies passion, place of camp, safety, warmth, learning and connecting. The younger women listened to their instructions on what wood and materials they needed to use and where to light it. Even though Ingrid had made campfires hundreds of times, as a younger Noongar woman it was important to listen and be guided by older people, especially those from country that is not one's own, in a demonstration of respect and relationship building.

As the young daughters watched on, they too assisted in the process, listening, doing and learning through what their mother instructed them to do. There was much joy as the old women looked on and for Ingrid and the girls. Ingrid recorded:

*I didn't have many of these experiences with my nanas and aunties so I also felt joy and a sense of identity and place, learning the old ways and how my daughters were part of a new generation where these experiences are part of the norm in society. They have access and these activities are allowed and encouraged.*

*As is tradition, the tea was prepared for a time to yarn and warm ourselves by the fire. This is when some of the students began to join the women again. As the familiar smell of tea leaves brewing filled the air, the nanas shared more and more information about the area and themselves. There was a story connected to the area that aligned with Ingrid's daughter's totems and to a conversation students had the day before about the yonga (grey kangaroo). Students earnestly recorded this.*

*The nanas also pointed out the local bushfoods in the area, funnily enough from the same tree we were all sitting under the whole time. This bush food is called Muuriny.<sup>14</sup> The Nanas instructed us to pick the nut from the tree. The tree was very prickly and very hard to get the nut off without stabbing yourself. Once Ingrid and students successfully extracted one, they were told*

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<sup>14</sup> See the entry on murriny subsequently prepared by students:  
<https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Murriny>.

*to place the nut in the coals of the fire. Again, the younger kids and students eagerly watched and participated. The nanas said we had to wait until the nut began to crack open. All were roasting the nut, which would improve the flavour and texture of the contents.*

As the group were doing this more students were returning, curious about what was happening. They joined the group, asking many questions as the Noongarpedia crew instructed them simply to watch and listen for now. Ingrid further noted:

*Just as the nanas had said, the nut slowly opened like a flower in the early stages of spring, like poetry. As I used a stern stick that could withstand the furious heat of the coals, I swept out the nut and awaited my next instruction. The Nanas explained that I would normally use a coolamon to open the nut and grind the contents into a fine paste. I could then use this paste to baste meat like chicken or fish, or simply eat on its own. As I did not have a coolamon, I located a small piece of curved bark, found a flat stone and started to grind the contents of the nut. Again as my children watched, they were eager to try the new skill in which I passed on the tools I had.*

For most of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous students this was the first time they had ever done anything like this. One Indigenous student remarked:

*This is the first time I had done something like this. My experience of growing up in a predominantly Western world did not allow me the time, space or ability to do such things. I had never used Noongarpedia or this kind of technology either. I loved how we combined things that many Noongars haven't had the space and opportunities to do. We got to do it on country, combining knowledge systems (Noongar and Western), with elders and with the kids joining us to experience this for the first time together. These knowledge carriers and their knowledge is vital to make sure these experiences can continue. I loved seeing how the digital domain can assist in sharing this here. (third year Noongar student)*

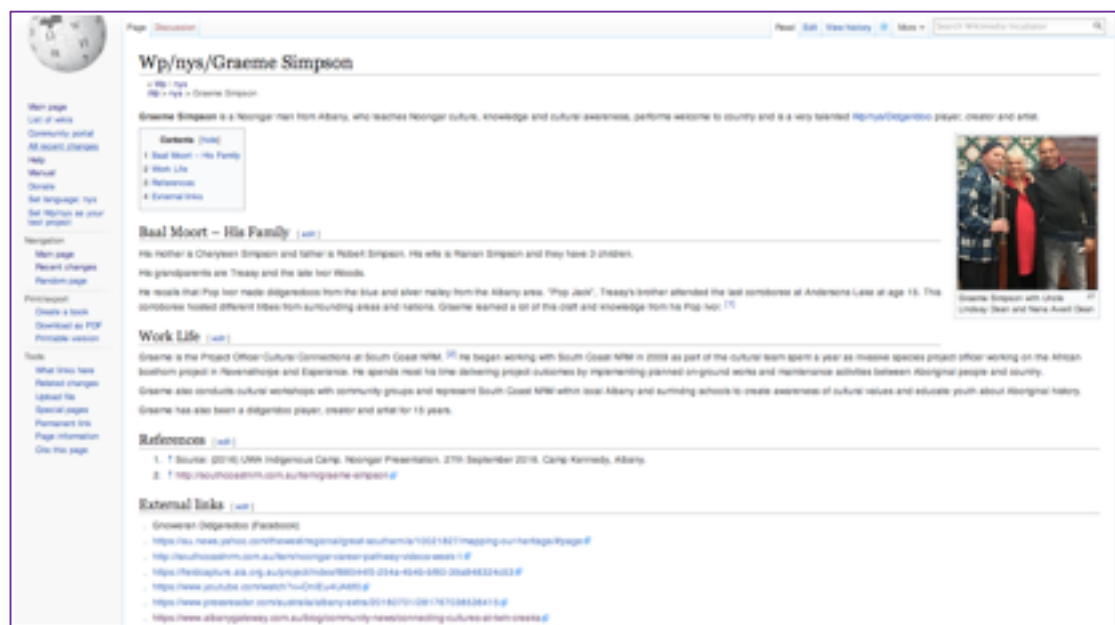
All of this was used to ask students to help us to shape a series of Noongarpedia posts by having discussions with the team. In this way, the team and students gnulla koorliny (went along together), listening, yarning, recording and then preparing posts.

### **South Coast Natural Resource Management**

The South Coast Natural Resource Management Centre in Albany (SCNRM) undertakes a range of work with local Noongar families throughout the region. As well as environmental work, staff join with local Noongar people to keep country and culture strong. Our collaboration with SCNRM began when the team was invited to run an introduction to Noongarpedia workshop and subsequently were invited

back. Immediately there was strong interest, particularly from the Cultural Heritage team members in seeing how Noongarpedia could be used to enhance the work they do with young people. Initially, Ingrid and Jennie met Noongar mamaan, Graeme Simpson, at a prior set of Noongarpedia workshops run at Lockyer Primary School, where he and his wife are active in the Aboriginal community, running the ‘Dreamtime Committee’ (parents and teachers hosting cultural events and supporting Aboriginal students).

After attending an introductory workshop about Noongarpedia’s possibilities for its use in the school and with families, Graeme was keen to create his own Noongarpedia account, so he could consider independently how he might be able to contribute to the site.<sup>15</sup> Like a number of young people we have met over the life of the project, Graeme wants to learn to speak more Noongar language and was really pleased to see the list of online language resources that are in the Noongarpedia.



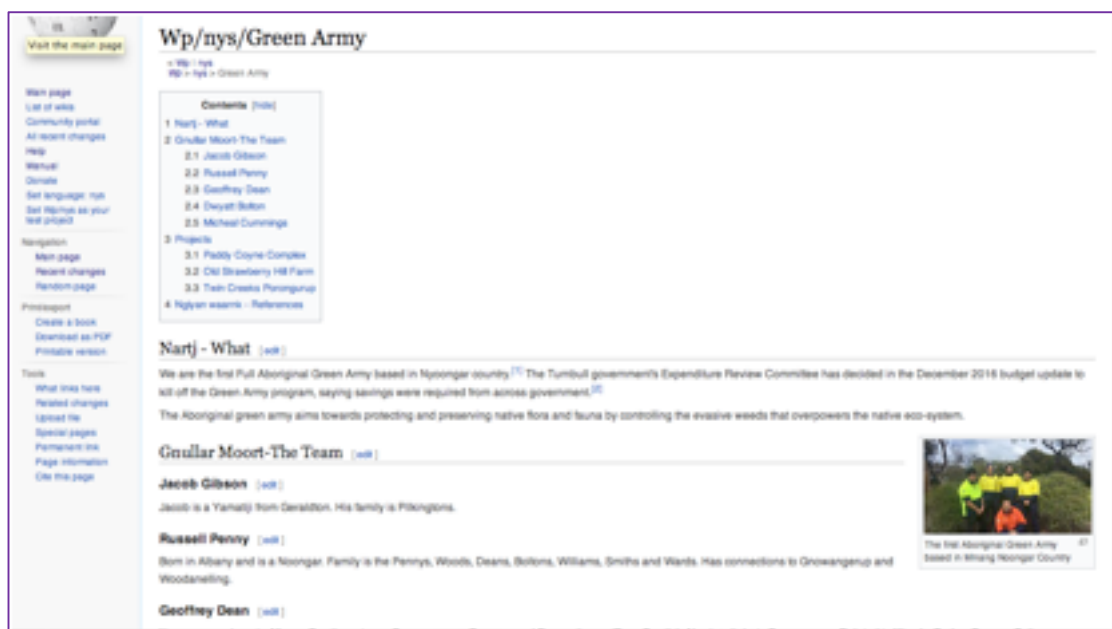
Members of the Noongarpedia team also travelled to the SCNRM offices in Albany and met in their main boardroom, where we had access to WiFi and digital projector. The session was attended by a member of the SCNRM Aboriginal Heritage team, a university placement student and 10 Green Army team members. The Green Army group joined our training session. This team is the first all-Indigenous Green Army group in Noongar boodjar.

<sup>15</sup> Have a look at Graeme Simpson’s Noongarpedia site:  
[https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Graeme\\_Simpson](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Graeme_Simpson).



*Green Army Team Members uploading photo onto Wikimedia Commons for article creation. Photo by Jennie Buchanan.*

The young men were quick to be able to use the site and as a group we created an entry to describe their work and role in caring for country. This included taking and uploading a group photo onto WikiCommons for use in the entry.<sup>16</sup>



<sup>16</sup> The Green Army entry on Noongarpedia:  
[https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Green Army](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Green_Army).



Members of the Cultural Heritage team are also exploring whether they will be able to use Noongarpedia as a platform to assist in making some of their work public. SCNRM have commissioned many cultural heritage studies. At present these are only available in hard copy and are archived in SCNRM's library. They are keen to make this work much more available to the public and local Noongar by posting them on an accessible electronic platform. They are presently experimenting with creating a Google maps site that links the work via a spatial platform. In 2017 they will explore the possibility of linking this to the Noongarpedia site.

As well as training in accessing and using the site, the project aims to work in ways that link SCNRM members with supporting organisations or individuals involved in Noongar language work. Already, thanks to their involvement with Noongarpedia, SCNRM Cultural Heritage staff have made links to Noongar language sites such as the Noongar Language Centre, the Wirlomin Project,<sup>17</sup> Boodjar Noongar Placenames database and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council website.

Graeme and staff at the centre were also interested in learning about the National Library of Australia's TROVE as a data source for content about Noongar.<sup>18</sup> For example, they found and downloaded the Daisy Bates Collection material on Albany Noongar language and knowledge, discovering the work of great grandparents and other Noongar from the turn of 20th century.

### **Bella Kelly exhibition**

Bella Kelly (1915-1994) was a Noongar landscape painter whose work spanned five decades and has featured in many public and private collections. Many see her work as having a strong influence on what has become known as the 'Carrolup School' of Noongar visual art. Recently this work has featured in a Retrospective exhibition throughout the South-West and was hosted by the John Curtin Gallery at Curtin University in August 2016.<sup>19</sup>

The John Curtin Gallery team generously invited Noongarpedia to participate in the special opening events of the Bella Kelly Exhibition. A short entry was created as a discussion starter for the event.<sup>20</sup> The Noongarpedia project was offered a showcase table in the foyer of the launch event. This enabled the team to meet a number of families and individuals who had links to the history of Marribank and Carrolup. It allowed them to provide an introduction to the way Noongarpedia can be used to share already-recorded histories of mission life, Noongar art and survival. Team members met with family members of the artist and let people know that we could assist them with contributing to and using the Noongarpedia down the track.

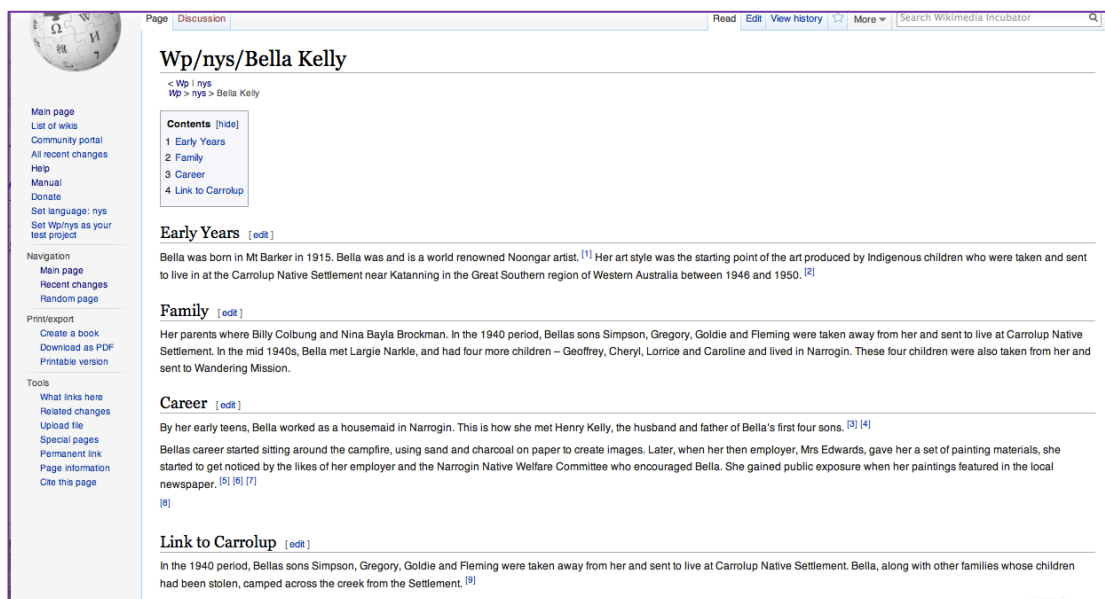
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<sup>17</sup> See: <http://wirlomin.com.au/>.

<sup>18</sup> See: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/result?q=noongar>.

<sup>19</sup> Bella Kelly Retrospective Collection: <http://www.bellakelly.com.au/introduction.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Bella Kelly exhibition: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Bella\\_Kelly](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Bella_Kelly).



We were situated alongside Damien Webb from Storylines, and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council Family History Team who were showcasing their digital family history collection. The event engendered a strong sense of connection among these different projects, all of which were seeking to use digital technologies and archives to support and strengthen Noongar knowledge transmission.

This also led to the creation of pages in the Noongarpedia for the Carrolup Artists and a listing of the children who were taken to the Marribank mission.<sup>21</sup>



<sup>21</sup> Carrolup Mission post: [https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Carrolup/Marribank\\_Mission](https://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/nys/Carrolup/Marribank_Mission).

## Conclusion

When it became clear that a Noongar-only language Noongarpedia would be unlikely to build the necessary critical numbers of people necessary to build the site, our strategy was to extend the project's involvement with 'knowledge agents' and to make alliances with key Noongar organisations and non-Noongar groups. Some of these relationships were helpful in identifying existing 'knowledge sources'. Some had much needed advice to offer. Others, such as Wikimedia Australia and Storylines, were active and involved in many of the activities and our work with schools and in universities. These groups extended the reach of contact and access to creative ideas that Noongarpedia could take on.

Contact with other groups moved the project from its beginnings, where the focus was on nurturing a small and specialist group of young Noongar, towards a multilayered approach where others could be invited to join the 'digital campfire' that had become Noongarpedia. As Len Collard observed, this moved the work more broadly into a public domain with non-Noongar taking on supportive roles:

*We started darbarkarn (going along quietly and steadily), a little like when you begin any journey on country. When we would first stop along the way, we were doing it to light little karla (fires) for the first group of young Noongar. Many of that group have gone along on their journey and I believe the embers from some of these fires are still burning for them. Some come back and sit with us from time to time. Some of them got fired up about Noongar knowledge and their family and have moved onto to great things.*

*Then we began to sit down at the fires of others like the Wikimedia mob and with Damian [at Storylines]. This helped warm us up some more and they came and sat with us at the new fires of the Wikibombs, in the schools and with uni-students. When we leave those fires they keep going with the embers staying warm for a long time. The more of those karla we light, the more different groups come and join us, the more the coals of Noongar knowledge will keep burning.*

**Baalup karl katatjin, baalup karlang boorda! – Those fires of knowledge, they keep warm by and by.**

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